

February 21, 2014

My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

After this Sunday, only one week remains before the start of Great Lent. The Church has been preparing us spiritually for the last three weeks by giving us wonderful lessons in the Sunday Gospel readings. The Church has also been preparing us bodily by gradually easing us into the diet that we are expected to keep during fasting period. Two weeks ago, the week was a fast-free week where we were freed from fasting on Wednesday and Friday. Last week the fasting on those two days was reinstated. This coming week, starting on Monday, is called cheese-fare week. On this week we give up all forms of meat (this includes chicken). In this way, when we begin the fast, our bodies are not stressed by the severe change in our diet. At the same time, we need to remember that we are preparing our bodies for fasting. Therefore, we should not be tempted by the strange tradition that has evolved of making this week one of satiating ourselves with such foods as blini. We can enjoy our blini in good measure and not stun our bodies with the severe overeating followed by strict fasting on Monday.... [continue](#)